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ABSTRACT

The term "dramaturgy" is derived from the notion of a theoretical performance. In the theater, the audience consents to temporarily suspend disbelief and unquestionably accepts the reality presented on stage. The actors, however, understand that the reality they present is constituted. This paper presents an ethnographic account and analysis of one elementary principal's use of dramaturgy to achieve hegemony within the school. The dramaturgies the principal performed, particularly his annual Halloween ride as the Headless Horseman, became powerful symbols of the dominant ideology the principal represented in the school. Examined are the social interactions through which a principal attempts to achieve the acceptance of the culture and ideology of the dominant social group in children of nondominant groups. First, there is a discussion of critical theory and hegemony through the cultural patterns of a dominant group. This is followed by a description of the research procedure detailing the use of ethnographic techniques. Next is a first-person account of the Halloween dramaturgy. It describes the actions of the principal and reactions of the researcher, students, teachers, and other people in the community. A discussion of dramaturgy and the example of the Headless Horseman provide the basis of the concluding discussion. (Contains 33 references.) (RR)

# HEGEMONY IN AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: THE PRINCIPAL AS HEADLESS HORSEMAN

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DRAFT

The purpose of this paper is to present an ethnographic account and analysis of one elementary principal's use of dramaturgy to achieve hegemony within the school. The dramaturgies the principal performed, particularly his annual Halloween ride as the Headless Horseman, became powerful symbols of the dominant ideology the principal represented in the school. The following vignette, "The Headless Horseman," is an account of one day, Halloween. The vignette is analyzed and critiqued in the subsequent section, "Dramaturgy."

Critical theory provides the conceptual frame for this study. Critical theory takes the position that social institutions are culturally constituted by the dominant social group. Maintaining the primacy of the culture of the dominant social group is seen as the most profound purpose of schooling (See Bates, 1981; 1985; Bourdieu, 1971). In the United States, schools are the officially and publicly recognized and supported organizations intended to reproduce the culture of the dominant Euro-American, Protestant, middle class (Schor, 1986).

Cultural patterns of the dominant group, presented by the school through the hidden or implicit curriculum become second nature, regulating processes of thought, language and behavior without being consciously apprehended. The school alters students' "cultural unconscious" (Bourdieu, 1971) which prepares them to accept the legitimacy of the dominant social group. (See Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Hamilton, 1980.)

Although schools serve the interests of the dominant group, they are not monolithic representations of the middle-class culture (Fine, 1986); they are cultural battlegrounds on which the contending dominant and nondominant ideologies compete for control (Bates, 1985). (See also Bernstein, 1976; Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Hamilton, 1980.) This cultural and ideologic conflict must be obscured from view (Femia, 1981) in order for the dominant social group to maintain control of schools. Complete control, however, is never fully achieved. The dominant group cannot simultaneously exclude, deprive and mistreat nondominant groups and fully assimilate them into its affirmative consensus (Femia, 1981). Social control, then, must be continuously negotiated (Giroux, 1981). The work of the late Italian Marxist, Antonio Gramsci (1971, 1973) provides an analysis of social control. Hegemony was Gramsci's key concept. Sassoon (1982) noted that Gramsci used hegemony:

> in the sense of influence, leadership, consent rather than the alternative and opposite meaning of domination. It has to do with the way one social group influences other groups...to gain their consent for its leadership in society as a whole. (p. 13)

In order to understand hegemony, it is necessary to contrast it with domination or social control achieved by influencing behavior and choice externally through coercion. Hegemony establishes an internal control so that personal convictions are consistent with the perspective of the dominant social group. One view of reality is dominant, informing the thoughts and actions of individuals.

Consent is largely achieved, Gramsci (1971, 1973) contends, through the leadership of organic intellectuals in social institutions such as schools, universities and the media. Organic intellectuals (e.g. school teachers and administrators, university professors, journalists, civil servants, business managers and technicians) are leaders who fulfill an ideologic and cultural purpose in society by representing the interests of the dominant social group.

The society into which individuals are born is already shaped by the competition of previously existing social groups. From that conflict one group has become dominant attempting to exercise hegemony. In order to legitimate its dominant position, it weaves its own culture and ideology throughout the social fabric. This is accomplished through the work of organic intellectuals at strategic social locations. From these positions, organic intellectuals influence the formation of individuals' cognitive and affective structures which enable the perception and interpretation of social reality. The work of school administrators and teachers as organic intellectuals is critical in the achievement of hegemony.

Bates (1985) proposes that administrators accomplish hegemony by reproducing the culture of the dominant group through the perpetuation and extension of the controlling ideology by manipulating the central communication system within the school. (See also Bernstein, 1976.) Hodgkinson (1991) suggests the notion of dramaturgy. Dramaturgies are symbolic representations of the administrator's power relationships with other participants in the school. It is largely through the use of dramaturgy that administrators, as organic intellectuals, control the central communication system and establish hegemony within the school.

This study examines the social interactions through which a principal attempts to achieve the acceptance of the culture and ideology of the dominant social group in children of nondominant groups. The study focuses on a Euro-American, middle-class principal nearing retirement and his use of dramaturgy to establish hegemony in the school.

The focal school is located in an economically-layered suburban school district adjacent to a major midwestern city. The school district is bisected by a river known as "the Mason-Dixon line." Middle and upper-middle class Euro-American neighborhoods are situated north of "the Mason-Dixon line." Poor and working-class, integrated and African-American communities are located in the southern end of the district. The school that is the focus of this research serves a predominantly African-American, poor and working-class neighborhood south of "the Mason-Dixon line."

A variety of ethnographic techniques, especially participant observation, interviews and document analysis, were used in an attempt to understand the way hegemony was achieved in the school. Collecting data from various sources using multiple approaches increased the internal validity of the findings. All data was triangulated (Wolcott, 1985) or cross-examined in order to provide "credibility" (Guba & Lincoln, 1981).

An intimate understanding of the research site was achieved by means of long-term participant observation (Ogbu, 1981; Smith, 1979; Spradley, 1980; Wilcox, 1982). As participant observer, I was involved in data collection for a period of two years, exceeding Wolcott's (1985) recommendation that the researcher remain in the field for at least twelve months in a setting as complex as a contemporary school.

I spent two or more days a week in the school, participating in many varied situations. By shadowing the principal, I established intense, continuing interaction with him during his daily routines. I served as quasi-assistant to him in order to "get inside" the role as he defined it. I also assisted teachers, clerical staff and parents and worked directly with students. In addition I visited various administrator, board of education and parent meetings. I also participated in social and ritual functions.

Through interactions in diverse settings I was able to cast the principal's behaviors in the context in which he participated. Thus, data about the principal's actions were gathered in terms of his own perceptions and in terms of the perceptions of others within and beyond the school.

Informal conversations and planned interviews (both open-ended and specifically directed) were conducted. Accounts of these interactions were recorded in fieldnotes or tape-recorded and transcribed.

Document analysis provided another source of data. This included memos and personal correspondence of the principal, district and school policy manuals, central office communications, weekly bulletins, records of student grades, standardized test scores and reports of disciplinary action.

As ethnographer I used anthropological, qualitative, participant-observer methodology to understand the complexity of the everyday social interaction of actors within the school. I located my understanding of the interactions in the school within a theoretical framework of hegemony. This perspective enabled me, as researcher, to reveal things about the researched that they were unable to perceive. Bates (1985) contends that ritual structures of communication are:

> ...obvious to outsiders describing what goes on in schools. They are not always obvious to those who participate more or less permanently in the rituals of schools. Because the form and meaning of the rituals are so well-known their impact can be underestimated. (p. 69)

The collection, analysis and reporting of data was guided by three ethical principles: informed consent, confidentiality, and reciprocity. The principal and central office administration gave approval for the study. Adults in the school understood that I was conducting research; I explained to children that I was writing a story about their principal and school. Code names replaced the proper names of study participants and geographic location. Descriptions of people, places and job descriptions were altered to protect the confidentiality of participants. Dates have been deleted, conflicts between the goal of accurate science or the priority of protecting study participants were decided in favor of my ethical commitment to individuals.

The principal, one central office administrator and the assistant principal were given drafts of the final project. The principal called it a "gross misrepresentation" and refused to discuss possible changes to make the document acceptable to him. The assistant principal and central office administrator asked for changes which were made. The assistant principal also provided a written statement verifying the accuracy of incidents reported in the study.

## "The Headless Horseman"

Washington Elementary School was preparing for Halloween. Principal Alvin Haines had been looking forward to this day for weeks. Halloween, he readily admitted, was his favorite day of the year.

Several years earlier (no one remembered exactly when) while principal at Roosevelt School, Haines decided to draw upon his fascination with Halloween, his passion for horses, his natural showmanship and drive to be centerstage to recreate the appearance of the Headless Horseman from Washington Irving's, "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow." It had become an annual tradition that Haines was determined to continue at Washington School.

I was excited, too. I had never really seen the Headless Horseman's ride. His office wall displayed a large black photograph of Haines in his imposing costume astride his horse. I had seen a video of a previous performance and heard Haines describe his exploits with excitement and pride.

Last year during Haines' second month as principal, all Washington School was primed for the appearance of the Headless Horseman. The Halloween ride had been announced to teachers and students. Teachers introduced students to the "Legend of Sleepy Hollow." Students who had completed all their work and had no discipline referrals were rewarded by watching a video of a PBS dramatization of the story in the gym. Primary teachers borrowed the photograph of Haines as the Headless Horseman to show students, explaining there was really nothing to fear; the Headless Horseman was only their principal wearing a costume.

Halloween arrived with a torrent of rain. Haines waited impatiently throughout the day for an intermission in the downpour so the show could begin. The end of the day approached, but the rain did not slack. It was obvious the children could not go outdoors for the performance. When the children donned costumes for their class parties during the last hour of the day, Haines saddled his horse, shrouded himself in his black-caped costume and began the haunt. He circled the school building, stopping at the windows of each classroom. The intensity of the storm increased; lightning and thunder accompanied his performance.

The appearance of the dark phantom interrupted the parties. Children responded to the eerie spectacle with squeals of delight, nervous giggles and phony screams. There was no apparent fear as children watched the Headless Horseman through the windows from the safety of their classrooms. It seemed much like enjoying a horror movie on television in the security of their homes.

As children began to form lines for dismissal, Haines, already drenched and muddy, decided to continue the ride. Still mounted on his horse, he hid from sight around the corner of the building from the main entrance of the school. Children, preoccupied with protecting coveted costumes and treats from the rain, darted from the

building, some toward school buses and cars, most to begin the soaking walk home. The Headless Horseman burst back and forth through the streams of children creating confusion, bewilderment, screams and tears. The dark horse and rider towered above a sea of black faces wet with rain, wide eyes white with fear. That image still haunted me a year later.

This would be Haines' last year as principal; he had announced his retirement effective at the end of the school year. In June, he planned to return to his childhood home in Daisy, Alabama. This Halloween would be the Headless Horseman's grand finale. Haines began planning the performance weeks in advance.

I asked Haines' permission to accompany him to his performances. "I'd be glad ta have your help, Sharon. Do ya want ta wear my Pink Panther costume?" Haines seemed to subtly communicate that I could come along if I contributed to the performance and wore a costume.

"I'll be happy to help. Thanks! I have a witch costume I'd like to wear. OK?" He agreed.

The role of ethnographer was difficult to negotiate. What was the proper balance between my role as participant and my role as observer? During the first year of the study, I worked at defining my role as a detached, objective observer. I found the role uncomfortable, unsatisfying. I viewed myself as an outsider; I felt teachers regarded me with suspicion. This role of researcher was congruent with my priorities as participant observer perhaps, but it was not consistent with my personal values. I typically formed positive relationships with friends and colleagues.

A personal and professional turning point for me occurred two weeks before Halloween; my father passed away unexpectedly. Alvin Haines and his secretary, Helen Tanner, sent a plant to my home. Teachers expressed sympathy, sharing their personal experiences and fears of losing a parent. They were reaching out to me while I was attempting to hold them at a distance.

I understood that they had offered me entrance to their school, classrooms and lives; I had denied them reciprocal access to mine. I began to search for ways to become a participant, colleague and friend. Alvin Haines was offering me an opportunity for more active involvement. I accepted.

I suggested to Haines that he might like to use the Disney animated version of the "Legend of Sleepy Hollow" to prepare students, rather than repeating the PBS version. He had never seen it, so I found the video at

a rental store and brought it for Haines to preview. He agreed it would be a more appealing introduction to the story. Haines made a copy of the video for the library. We scheduled it as the TCP (Task Completion Program) movie to be shown the day before Halloween. Students who had completed all assigned work and received no discipline "write-ups" would watch the video in the gym.

When previewing the video, Haines shared an idea with me. He wanted to make the Headless Horseman's last appearance at Washington an experience to remember. Rather than appearing alone as the Headless Horseman as he always had, Haines wanted to reenact the last climactic scene of the story in which the mischievous Brahms Bones, disguised as the Headless Horseman, chased the timid school master, Ichabod Crane, until the real Headless Horseman appeared, overpowering both of them.

Haines decided to enlist the help of his friend, Walter Harris, acting principal of South Middle School, located just a few blocks from Washington. Harris, a tall, young, handsome African-American, was the son of a prominent local pastor. He was highly respected in the community and valued as a positive role model for his African-American students. Harris shared Haines' interest in riding and showing horses. He agreed to bring his horse and play the role of Ichabod Crane, the awkward, timid, superstitious school master.

Harris suggested that Becky, one of his high school students who worked at the stable where he and Haines boarded their horses, play the part of Brahms Bones. Harris contacted her and she agreed.

With the casting completed, it was my task to locate props, a tricorn hat for Ichabod Crane and a sword for the Headless Horseman, and to record music to accompany the performance. Haines would contact the district audio-visual coordinator to set up an outdoor sound system and run sound for the Halloween performance. Haines also contacted the district coordinator of public relations. He wanted community attention for his last ride as the Headless Horseman.

Although this special attention was reserved for the Washington performance, Haines received many invitations to make Halloween appearances. His schedule for Halloween included four daytime performances at schools, two evening appearances at area churches and a late-night ride through his own neighborhood in Briarwood.

This full schedule demanded an early start. Halloween arrived, a cool, brisk, sunny morning. Wearing my witch costume, I arrived at Washington at 7:15 a.m. sharp as planned. Just before I entered the office I put

on my mask, hoping to startle Haines. He wasn't in the office. The lights were on and the door was open, but he wasn't there. I removed my mask and sat down to wait. I was looking forward to seeing his prize-winning Headless Horseman costume.

I was disappointed when he rounded the corner in western gear--black felt cowboy hat, red and black western shirt, black slacks, an impressive silver belt buckle and western boots. I expected him to be in high spirits since Halloween, as he often declared, was his "favorite holiday." I was wrong; Haines was obviously angry. I asked what was wrong.

"Aw, I stayed late at the stables last night, gettin' the horse an' equipment ready for taday. Loretta [his wife] an' Tammy [his daughter-in-law] drove by ta check-up on me. Soon as they saw me, they drove off. They thought I was out screwin' 'round. Loretta thinks I'm datin' a sixteen-year-old girl."

I didn't know how to respond. I was often uncomfortable when Haines talked of his marital problems with me. He was clearly lonely and needed a caring friend to listen. I once asked him who listened and provided support when he needed to talk. Haines replied that he confided in Helen Tanner--his secretary, the assistant principal--Joyce Mitchell, and me. I was reluctant to be drawn into Haines' personal life, but I listened so often that he laughingly suggested I consider counseling instead of administration as a career.

I worried about maintaining my integrity as participant-observer. I wanted access to his thoughts as principal; I did not seek information regarding his wife's accusations, the rumors of his affairs, his deteriorating relationship with his five children or the resulting loss of his position as lay minister at the Baptist church he had founded and still attended. These themes, however, were interwoven throughout our shared reflections about his decisions and actions as principal.

We walked in silence from the office to his car. Haines opened the car door for me and waited to close it when I was seated. As we drove to the stable, Haines explained his plans. "We're gonna meet Kevin at the stable. He works part-time 'round there. He's gonna help us taday. I'll take you two ta breakfast, first." Haines paused. "The kids have taken Loretta's side. Tammy teaches at Clark School [in an adjoining district]. She called me an' wanted the Headless Horseman ta come ta her school. That's one o' the places I'm goin' taday. It makes me furious that she takes Loretta's side, spies on me, an' still asks me ta do things for 'er."

When we arrived at the stable, Kevin was waiting in his pick-up truck. I moved to the back seat so he could ride in front with Haines. Aware of the rumor's about Haines' affairs and his marital tensions, I tried to maintain a professional distance. I was pleased Kevin was accompanying us for the day.

Haines drove a few blocks to the Waffle House restaurant. When we entered the small, almost-empty restaurant, I noticed there were only booths. I chose a table, and sat down. Kevin sat across from me. Haines slid in next to me.

When the waitress took our order, she greeted Haines as if she knew him. I asked if she were a friend. "No," Haines explained. "I just eat here a lot. I haven't eaten a meal at home in eight months." Haines changed the topic of conversation to horses and the owners who boarded them at the stable. I listened while Haines and Kevin talked.

Haines mentioned his friendship with Ruth, a young woman who boarded a horse at the stable. He explained that she worked as a prostitute to put herself through college. "She's pale an' thin," Haines said. "Looks kinda sick, a real nice girl. I don't think she eats right. I took her out ta eat a couple o' times. I tried ta talk her into doin' somethin' else. I'm afraid she's gonna get AIDS if she doesn't already." Kevin agreed and the conversation moved on to other common acquaintances from the stable.

After breakfast we returned to the stable where Haines and Kevin hitched the horse trailer to the car. While Kevin loaded tack, Haines and I walked through the muddy pasture to the barn. The horse was still eating oats. Haines decided to give her a few more minutes. "She'll be one tired horse before this day's over." He attached the lead rope to the mare's halter and led her to the trailer. Haines handed me a wire brush and told me to brush her mane and tail while he blacked her hooves. (Standing there in the mud in my witch costume, I reflected upon how different the role of ethnographer was from the textbook accounts I had read.) After tying pink show ribbons into the mare's mane and tail, Haines loaded her into the trailer, and we left for his first performance at Roosevelt School.

Haines had been principal at Roosevelt Elementary School for twelve years until he was reassigned last year to Washington. Since we arrived early, he took Kevin and me inside for a tour. When we entered the building, Haines was immediately greeted by a smiling, large, African-American, female teacher: "Why, there's Cowboy

Haines!" A small, Euro-American girl hugged his knees: "You're the best principal I ever had!" Both teachers and students seemed genuinely glad to see Haines. They surrounded him in the front hallway, welcoming him with hugs and warm handshakes.

The new principal, a small, quiet man, stood watching from the office doorway. He seemed awkward and uncomfortable with Haines. I noticed the conspicuous contrast between the flamboyant "Cowboy Haines" and the conventional shirt and tie and unassuming manner of the new principal. The school nurse who worked with Haines at both Roosevelt and Washington later explained, "Alvin's a tough act to follow. He's such a performer. You know, I'm surprised he hasn't starved to death. Every time he opens the refrigerator door, the light comes on, and he goes into his song and dance. He's such a showman, he forgets to eat."

The new principal began calling on the intercom for classes to "line-up and proceed" to the athletic field behind the school. Haines, Kevin and I returned to the horse trailer. As Kevin unloaded and saddled the mare, Haines took off his western hat and handed it to me. I helped him put his elaborate costume on over his clothes. Kevin slipped into Haines' satin Pink Panther costume and headed for the field to wave at the costumed children and teachers as they arrived. Haines mounted his horse. I straightened his cape and handed the sword and jack-o-lantern to him.

"Listen," he said. "You can already hear 'em screamin'."

I walked around the corner of the building, through the trees that still hid Haines from view, just in time to see the last students file from the building. Students and teachers, costumes fluttering in the breeze, stood single-file in the shape of a horseshoe. The opening in the horseshoe pointed in the direction from which I entered and where the Headless Horseman would soon appear. As I came into view in my witch mask and costume, the students' screams crescendoed. It was a curious feeling to know that I was frightening the schoolchildren. When I joined the horseshoe of spectators, the children became more quiet.

Then, the Headless Horseman made his appearance, picking his way slowly through the trees. He stopped at the top of the hill. The horse and rider were motionless except for the horse's mane, tail and show ribbons and the rider's black cape fluttering with the wind. It was an impressive pose, the dark horseman against the backdrop

of the green hill and autumn foliage. Until then, I had not appreciated the beauty of the horse. With her head erect, she too seemed to enjoy the excitement.

Haines was over six feet tall. In his costume, he seemed even taller. The Headless Horseman was indeed a striking figure. He held the pose, waiting for just the right moment. "First, I tease 'em. Then, I work the audience," he explained later.

As the screams began to subside, the Headless Horseman broke suddenly toward the field. After galloping back and forth across the field a few times, he began at one end of the horseshoe, trotting the horse within inches of each student. Haines obviously enjoyed his own performance. Students' screams grew louder. The horseshoe began to disintegrate. Younger students clung to their teachers; some were in tears. A small group of students brokc away and ran toward the safety of the bushes, but the Headless Horseman headed them off, herding them like cattle back toward the main group. Just as it seemed the children were out of control, the Headless Horseman rode to the center of the field, stopped, threw down the sword and jack-o-lantern and lifted the costume off his head and shoulders. As the audience cheered, he held the costume high, donned the cowboy hat that I had dutifully brought him, and proudly rode the length of the horseshoe.

As the students filed back into the building, Haines dismounted and led the horse back to the trailer. I retrieved the sword and jack-o-lantern, realizing that I was performing the duties of the stage crew in exchange for the privilege of accompanying the Headless Horseman on his ride.

I packed the costumes and props in the car. Haines and Kevin unsaddled and rubbed down the sweating horse before loading her into the trailer. Back in the car, we started to Washington. Haines was in high spirits. As he drove, he reminisced.

"See that school over there, Our Lady of Good Council? Once I rode through Good Council School. It was Halloween, four or five years ago. The kids were just comin' out for recess. I stalked 'em from the bushes. I waited for 'em ta all get on the playground an' then I busted out o' the bushes. Sent the kids scatterin'. They were screamin' so much the principal come out ta see what all the ruckus was 'bout. So I headed back ta Roosevelt, cuttin' through that gas station. When I got back ta Roosevelt, I ran in the office and called the principal at Good Council. I told her, 'We've just had a major disturbance here at Roosevelt. Have you seen a guy on

horseback who's ridin' 'round scarin' children?' She said, 'I sure have. I was just getting ready to call the police.'"

Kevin joined in Haines' laughter, providing the encouragement he needed to launch into another Headless Horseman tale. "Once I rode through a nursery school yard at recess. The children scattered, ran off in every direction. Some ran into a firehouse. Some ran to the post office, an' the few that knew their way ran all the way home."

Haines didn't wait for a response. Without losing momentum, he began his next yarn. "I've had mothers complain that the Headless Horseman caused kids to have nightmares. They come ta my door in the middle o' the night with their young children, askin' me ta show 'em my costume an' tell 'em it wasn't real. O' course, when they saw my real face, it didn't help."

When we arrived at Washington, Haines drove to the rear of the school and parked on the athletic field. Two costumed riders were already galloping around the field. Walter Harris, principal of nearby South Middle School, was dressed in tricorn hat, cravat, jacket and knee pants. He was to play the role of Ichabod Crane. His former student, Becky, was dressed in knee pants with white shirt and knee socks. Becky had made a white cloth mask that fitted over her entire head with holes for her eyes, nose and mouth. Becky was to play the part of Brahms Bones, the town bully.

The Riverside School District had gone to great lengths to promote Alvin Haines' last ride as the Headless Horseman. The central article in the October issue of the monthly staff newsletter was "Horseman 'Heads Off' Into the Sunset." The local suburban weekly journal had featured a photo of Haines in costume on horseback and an "exclusive interview." Waiting for the performance on the viewing stand the district had specially constructed were cameramen from three local television stations and a reporter and photographer from the major, metropolitan, daily newspaper.

As the costumed children and teachers filed from the school to the field forming a horseshoe, the Pink Panther and I teased the students. I realized that somehow I was enjoying frightening the children with my witch cackle and spooky gestures. The anonymity provided by the mask and costume enabled me to overcome my natural inhibitions. I began to understand the attraction the role of the Headless Horseman offered Haines; the sense of

power provided a rush, a natural high. I felt uncomfortable, guilty for deriving pleasure from the discomfort of children. Did Haines feel guilty? That was a question I felt compelled to ask him.

The audience was in place. The riders were mounted, hidden from view by the horse trailers. It was time for the show. At my cue, the district sound technician started the music Haines and I had painstakingly recorded and edited from Disney's "Legend of Sleepy Hollow."

At my signal, Ichabod Crane began his ride, cautiously looking over his shoulder at every eerie sound. At my next cue Brahms Bones, disguised as the Headless Horseman, burst onto the field and began chasing Ichabod Crane. Both horses galloped in the center of the horseshoe of spectators, delighting the children.

As the music peaked I signaled Haines, and the Headless Horseman made his appearance. He raced after the riders, briefly following behind Brahms Bones. When the Headless Horseman cut between the riders overpowering Brahms Bones, Bones exited toward the horse trailer. The Headless Horseman focused his full attention on Ichabod Crane.

Harris' performance as Ichabod was convincing. He appeared to spur his horse to go faster, but kept him at a deliberate pace. Harris seemed genuinely frightened. His white eyes flashed. He explained to me later that it wasn't difficult with the Headless Horseman rushing back and forth behind him, his sword whistling overhead.

At the climax of the music, the Headless Horseman threw the jack-o-lantern at Ichabod Crane who exited past the horse trailers. The audience cheered, but their delight quickly changed to fear as the Headless Horseman turned his attention to the children. Starting at one leg of the horseshoe, he weaved in and out among the children. The Headless Horseman galloped closer and closer. There were screams and tears. Older children broke from the line, running until the Headless Horseman chased them down. Younger children clung to their teachers.

The performance ended as before. Haines rode to the center of the field, threw down the sword, removed the costume and donned his western hat. Lifting the costume overhead, he circled the field for his curtain call.

When the streams of children started for the school building, we began to load the horse and equipment for the next performance. Settled in the back seat of his car as we drove, I asked Haines if he ever felt guilty about frightening the children.

His response was indignant. "Guilty! Why should I feel guilty? It scares the devil out of 'em an' then they really behave. Good behavior helps kids in school, an' it really helps their teachers. But it doesn't last. So I have ta do it every year...Yes, I enjoy scaring children. I do it for their own good. I do it so they can get ahead."

In subsequent months I interviewed the assistant principal, Joyce Mitchell, about Haines' performance as the Headless Horseman. "It was originally designed to be something special for Roosevelt that no other school had," Mitchell answered. "He just dressed up like the Headless Horseman and brought his horse to school on Halloween, but it kept getting bigger. When he made it a traveling show, it was positive publicity for Roosevelt as it was for Washington here. But see, he had times where this power thing ran away with him, where he would run the horse into kindergarten lines. At Madison School, the first time he came over, I nearly died. The kids scattered into the street. And I thought, 'God! Come on, Jack.' It's scary for these kids. I know it's a well-trained horse, but you know. Plus he knows and likes the principal, Elizabeth Pollard, real well, and he understands that she's a hyperactive adult. She was just a basket case, an absolute basket case. It was not a popular thing over there. In fact, he was never invited back. It just really scared the pants off people, and it looked cruel to me. It looked cruel to ride that great big horse into that line of little, teeny people standing hand-in-hand, not knowing what to expect."

"Did you tell Alvin how you felt?" I asked.

"Yeah, and so did Elizabeth [Pollard]," Mitchell responded. "He just said, 'You people are overreacting.' But he has calmed it down 'cause I did a read-my-lips number. The way he weaves into the kids is much milder."

I was surprised. "This is milder?" I asked.

"Oh, yeah," she answered. "He's really calmed it down the last couple of years."

"I've interviewed more than a hundred students," I explained. "I asked for volunteers from each grade level and talked with them in groups of four or five. I asked all of them what they thought about the Headless Horseman. In every group of kindergartners at least one child initiated that he or she had bad dreams about it. We have two good kindergarten teachers. Both had taken pains to prepare the children. They had borrowed Alvin's photographs. They had read them the story, but the children were still afraid."

"One of the kindergarten teachers talked to him about it," Mitchell explained. "She said she didn't like it and asked not to be included. She asked to keep her children in, but Alvin said no. Some parents kept their kids home that day. The little ones can't understand the story, but it's not just the little ones who are afraid."

At another time, I asked the superintendent, Dr. Samuel Tate to explain Haines' dramaturgy of the Headless Horseman.

Tate laughed. "I totally can't. It's an absolute phenomenon to me. I don't know. One day he said, 'Come over. I'm gonna ride my horse.' I had principals in Kentucky who have had horses, and they bring their horses. But this sucker came out with no head on and this thing blaring out of the head he was carrying. And I thought to myself, this guy has got to be a showman from the word go. I don't know why he does that. I have absolutely no idea. It's terribly effective. The kids love it. He loves it. I think..." he paused. "It's a man playing a child, playing hide and seek with children, and jumping out and saying, 'Boo!' I'll tell ya, I'll never forget it. That'll go in my book, when I write my book."

"No, that's my book!" I said. We laughed. "It's become a ritual. What's its function?"

"Well," Tate paused. "I'll tell ya, I think a lot of people who go into teaching, I know I did, found it to be the biggest ego trip in the world. I mean there's instant acceptance. The kids love you. It's a way that children can express a love for Alvin that he can accept in a way where he can get in front of a crowd and take their cheers and have 'em squeal and holler and run around and run away. I just think it's a real reward for him."

"Do you think there have been benefits from the Headless Horseman for the district?" I asked.

"Sure. The people who don't know school principals, who think that they're stuffy old goats, they have to admit that this is a real human being with a weird sense of humor and a crazy outfit. There he is out there in all his glory. It brings humanity to the profession, I suppose."

"Do you think there are any disadvantages to his Headless Horseman routine?"

"I don't know," Tate admitted. "I've thought about, well, I've thought about would he make a fool out of himself. Would people say, 'Well, that guy's just flat out nuts?' I wondered whether he'd be accused of too much gore on the cape and so forth. And I thought about safety things. Gee, what happens if the horse gets away from him and runs into the crowd or something like that? Frankly, I'll be pleased when it's over because it's

dangerous when you bring an animal out on the grounds, and you've got a bunch of kids. But I'll be the richer for having had the experience, I guess."

"There was the wonderful color picture of the Headless Horseman on the front page of the newspaper and the television news coverage," I said. "Alvin loved it. There was also a local newspaper article. I brought it with me. Have you seen it? This section?" I handed him the newspaper clipping and pointed to a particular section of the story.

Tate began reading aloud, "'I enjoy scaring children.'" He laughed, "Well that's Alvin. Yeah. I think he's funnin' with you a little bit. I don't know whether he really believes that or not, whether it's done for fear."

"I've heard him tell this story," I said pointing to a particular paragraph of the story, "about riding through the playground at Our Lady of Good Council School. He tells the story with great delight and a twinkle in his eyes."

"Well that's southern, you know. Southern men delight in telling ghost stories and things like that. You've heard the term 'hushpuppies?' Southern men used to sit around a fire when they'd go hunting and tell scary stories. And they would throw cornbread to the dogs and say, 'Hush, puppies.' That's supposed to be how that got started.

"When I was in Tennessee, the men, I mean the true kind of southern typical, the kind of people where you're invited to their home and after dinner is serviced on the fine silver and when you've finished your dessert, where the men get up and adjourn to the study and close the doors and the women clean up. That still goes on in Tennessee. There are strong traditions that way, and discipline is a big thing in the south.

"If you look regionally at the things that drive education, the south is driven by discipline and football." I laughed. "Really!" Tate insisted. "Honest, it is. We spent more time in Tennessee working on codes of conduct than anything else or winning football games. If you had discipline and if your team took the 4-A state championship, you didn't have a thing to worry about. I mean it didn't matter whether they learned anything or not. They really were high on discipline and athletics. And athletics is a kind of discipline. It's conforming to the team. It's working together.

"There was an absolute preoccupation with discipline, and kids were supposed to be afraid when the principal came around. And if that principal didn't come around with a little crop. Whap!" He clapped his hands. "They weren't doin' their job.

"So maybe the Headless Horseman's just an extension of that preoccupation with kids supposed to be afraid of authority." Tate clapped his hands for emphasis. "They're supposed to tow the line." He clapped his hands together again. I mean that's just education in Alabama, Tennessee and Kentucky. It's just a real mystique in that area. Southern men delight in scaring children."

## Dramaturgy

The term, dramaturgy, is derived from the notion of a theatrical performance. In the theatre, the audience consents to temporarily suspend disbelief and unquestioningly accepts the reality presented on stage. The actors, however, understand that the reality they present is constituted.

Within organizations, reality is also constituted through dramaturgy. Organizational participants are intended to suspend disbelief and accept and follow the representation of reality as accurate and natural. Dramaturgy serves as an "incantation for the bewitchment of the led" (Hodgkinson, 1982, p. 217; see also Goffman, 1967, 1969; Wittginstein, 1953). It is a powerful instrument by which the organic intellectual achieves hegemony.

Drawing largely from Foucault (1979), I have developed four criteria an event must satisfy in order to be viewed as dramaturgy. First, it is a visible ceremony. The spectacle requires a spectator. "Not only must people know, they must see with their own eyes" (Foucault, 1979, p. 58). Second, a dramaturgy is an "anchoring point for a manifestation of power" (Foucault, 1979, p. 55); actual and/or symbolic control must be wielded. Third, dramaturgy must display a dissymetry of power; the powerful and the powerless are clearly distinguished. The powerless "must be made to be afraid" (Foucault, 1979, p. 58). Last, the ceremony must be redundant (Bates, 1985); it must be regularly repeated so that it is unquestioningly accepted as the true symbol of lived relationships among people.

Alvin Haines developed a complex repertoire of dramaturgies in the school (for additional examples see Lee, 1992). He was invariably the leading man, the star, of his dramaturgies. Teachers, students or parents

performed roles as supporting players or became the audience. Without exception, Haines was the active sender, and they were the relatively passive receivers of the symbolic messages expressed by the dramaturgies he created.

In order for him to be successful as an administrator, Alvin Haines was expected to establish strands of the ideology of the dominant social group he represented within Washington School (see Callahan, 1962; Meyer & Scott, 1983). By manipulating the central message system of the school (Bernstein, 1975; Bernstein, 1976), Haines struggled to shape it in his own image (Greenfield, 1973). Dramaturgy was Haines' central mechanism to ensure that the school reflected, legitimated, and perpetuated the values that were central to the ideology he represented as organic intellectual.

According to Greenfield (1980), organizations are constituted realities, "woven in symbols and expressed in language" (p. 44). The reality of Washington School was largely constituted by the dramaturgies Alvin Haines performed. Through dramaturgy he was able to determine what was appropriate for inclusion in or exclusion from consideration, practice, and consciousness (Bates, 1985; Brown, 1978; Giroux, 1981) in the school. Haines distracted attention from the explicit curriculum (Eisner, 1985), focusing instead on the hidden curriculum of the dominant ideology.

The ideology Haines presented through dramaturgy provided the groundwork for formation of beliefs and morality; it determined the rules for construction of social and individual identities. The dominant ideology was the substance of the hidden or implicit curriculum presented through dramaturgy. Haines influenced children of nondominant groups to accept the legitimacy and justness of their subordination. His students learned that certain knowledge was required for success and that they were incapable of learning it.

> Working- and under-class children are not expected to <u>become</u> middle class; they are expected to subscribe to the notion that there <u>should be</u> different groups in a society, some meant to produce and others to control....it is a model where those who have look to the ones who do not and say, "It's there for the taking if only you'll try." Hegemony is a matter of beliefs, values, and hope that the system is right, and that it is you who are wrong, or incapable, or not smart enough. (Foster, 1986, p. 101)

Alvin Haines translated themes of the ideology of the dominant group he represented into actions and unequal power relationships in the school. He constituted the essence of his "administrative curriculum" (Bates, 1985) through dramaturgy.

Alvin Haines seemed to especially relish the flamboyance of costumed dramaturgy. At Roosevelt, he had performed ceremonies featuring himself as the Pink Panther and Kermit the Frog. On at least one occasion, he had ridden his motorcycle through the halls dressed as Miss Piggy. His most spectacular starring role, however, was the villain from Washington Irving's the "Legend of Sleepy Hollow." Haines first portrayed the Headless Horseman while principal at Roosevelt. It was a tradition he continued each Halloween until the grand finale at Washington School.

Since it's debut, the appearance of the Headless Horseman had been a solo performance. Haines, over six feet tall, was an imposing figure in his dramatic, caped costume astride his horse. Costumed teachers and students, largely African-American, stood in the shape of a horseshoe on the playground as his audience.

When the Headless Horseman rode in the center of the horseshoe, the audience appeared to enjoy the performance. The children expressed genuine terror, however, when the Headless Horseman violated the imaginary "fourth wall" that separated the audience from the stage. The spectators became victims as the Headless Horseman burst through the line of children scattering them, then herding them like cattle back together.

For the Headless Horseman's climactic final performance at Washington School, Haines enlarged the cast to include his friend, Walter Harris, principal of South Middle School. Harris, a young, handsome African-American, was the son of a prominent, local pastor. Harris was respected as a community leader, a role model for African-American youths. He had agreed to bring his horse and perform the role of Ichabod Crane, the timid, awkward school teacher. Harris arranged for Becky, a Euro-American high school student, to bring her horse and play the role of the town bully, Brahms Bones.

The audience stood hand-in-hand in the familiar horseshoe shape. The performance began as Ichabod Crane was chased by Brahms Bones, both on horseback. Then, the Headless Horseman burst on the scene, first overwhelming the bully, then the school teacher before he turned his attention to overpowering the children.

Haines said he intended his performance to frighten youngsters. In fact, he joked about causing children to have nightmares. He said he did it "for their own good" to "help their behavior." When teachers approached Haines about keeping their students indoors away from the dramaturgy, he refused. Unless parents kept students at home, they were required to attend his Halloween performance.

The dramaturgy of the Headless Horseman was a vivid manifestation of the dissymetry of power relationships in the school and broader society. It displayed a certain order of positions or statuses as accurate and natural. When Haines overpowered Becky, it represented the dominance of men over women. Overwhelming Harris symbolized the principal's superiority over teachers and the dominance of Euro-American people and culture over African Americans. Haines' Halloween dramaturgy effectively portrayed the power of the principal over his students. When the Headless Horseman scattered, chased and herded African-American youngsters on foot, participants relived the terrorizing of generations of African Americans by southern white men in hoods.

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